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Book Reviews.

La Littérature des Pauvres dans la Bible. Par ISIDORE LOEB. Préface de Théodore Reinach. Paris: Librairie Léopold Cerf. Pp. xv+280.

This work with its enigmatical title is a product of the modern French school of biblical criticism. M. Loeb carried on his investigations for some years, and after his death they were published by his intimate friend, M. Reinach. The literature which this volume discusses is that which is supposed by the author to have been produced between the return from the captivity at Babylon and the insurrection of the Maccabees. At the return from the captivity he supposes there was a class of persons, not necessarily organized into one compact body, but made up of the pious, just, holy, pure, and humble persons who constituted the choicest element of the returned captives. They were, in a word, the Puritans of that time, and left us some of the choicest ideas, religious, and spiritual, which they possessed. It should be said, however, that this theory owes its origin to Graetz who promulgated it in his commentary on the Psalms published in 1882. M. Loeb has taken up this theory of Graetz and carried it out to its logical conclusions. This class of persons, though modest and retiring, was yet exceedingly active in literary and religious work. This literary work comprises before everything else two large sections of the biblical canon, namely, the collection of the Psalms and the section of prophecy now known among scholars as the Second Isaiah.

This entire work is devoted to the analysis and dissection, so to speak, of these two works, indicating the different periods in which the several parts arose and their purpose. Some of the theories advocated in the discussion are of interest, as illustrating the extent to which the French school has already gone. The Cyrus of Second Isaiah is the Messianic Cyrus, and the author or the authors of this collection lived, not in Babylon, but in Palestine, some time after the captivity. The captives, that is, the exiles of whom the prophet speaks at the epoch of the Messiah, are not the exiles from Babylon, but members of Israel scattered among all the nations.

The opinion of the author regarding the chronology of the Psalms is that their composition should be located within the years 589 and 167 B. C. He does not admit as does Renan the existence of a single Psalm before the exile, nor with Reuss that any part of the collection dates from the Asmonean epoch. Nor does he admit with Graetz that the Psalms were intended principally or exclusively to be liturgical compositions designed for temple service. He says there is no historical background to these poems. They are a history of the Jewish soul at the time of the second temple, and a subjective,

interior, moral history, so to speak, in which there is nothing whatever retained of the external occurrences.

Space will not allow us to go more fully into his discussion. He has apparently almost at the same time as Maurice Vernes, and for similar reasons, entirely thrown off the yoke of orthodox exegesis, even the exegesis of Graf, Kuenen, Reuss and Wellhausen. M. Loeb certainly admires the great works of this latter school, but does not at all accept their results. He enjoys a liberty entirely his own and is bound by no shackles. The book is a good illustration and sample of the latest and most radical school which has its headquarters in Paris. It is simply the logical outcome of the free-handed and subjective method of criticism which had its roots in Holland and Germany. We see here the legitimate fruits and most startling results, even according to the acknowledgment of those who "set the ball to rolling." The author of this volume has been very highly praised, being a Jew himself, by those who work in the same line, and on every hand receives the highest commendation for his thoroughness and acuteness. The book, unfortunately, has no index, either of Scripture texts or of topics. The Psalms are designated in a table of contents according to the theme which they separately discuss.

PRICE.

Assyrian Echoes of the Word. By REV. THOMAS LAURIE, D.D. With illustrations. American Tract Society. Large 8vo., pp. 380.

The author of this work does not claim to be an Assyriologist. "His has been the humbler aim of making a larger number acquainted with the work that has been done, and with some at least of the results obtained. He has sought to gather up the fragments that nothing be lost; so that humble believers who have been startled by the noise of the battle now raging round the Word may have their hearts reassured by the corroborations of the truth that lie stored up in every ancient mound and are brought to light by the pick of the explorer."

The standpoint of the author does not seem to be an ideal one. If he is consistent, he will be compelled to use only that material which confirms or seems to confirm traditional views, and to reject that which does not agree with his opinions. Where difficulties present themselves he is inclined to minimize their importance.

The author does not seem to take into consideration "the results which have been obtained during the last ten or fifteen years." Little or no attention is paid to modern Assyrian scholars. He has limited himself to ancient sources, ignoring the valuable work which has been done by such men as Hommel, Bezold, Haupt, Zimmern, Jensen, Winckler, Lehmann, Peiser, etc. The work as a whole cannot be said to be reliable. One is sure that much valuable material has been omitted. He is equally sure that what is given might be, is bound to be, unreliable. It is to be regretted that with so good a purpose the results should be so unsatisfactory. The field is one, however, in which few men are able to do satisfactory work.

A. J. P.